

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1.) Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 21, 30 and 38, and cancelled claims 28 and 37. Accordingly, claims 21-27, 29-36 and 38-39 remain pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2.) Examiner Objections – Abstract

Per the Examiner's request, an Abstract is submitted herewith on a separate sheet.

3.) Examiner Objections – Specification

The Examiner requested that Applicants insert a "cross-reference related-application section under the title of the specification for continuing data of [the] application." The present application, however, is a national stage application submitted under 35 U.S.C. §371, and no such claim of priority is required. The Examiner should review MPEP §1893.03(c), wherein it is noted that:

"[A] national stage application submitted under 35 U.S.C. **371** may not claim benefit of the filing date of the international application of which it is the national stage since its filing date is the date of filing of that international application. See also **MPEP § 1893.03(b)**. Stated differently, since the international application is not an earlier application (it has the same filing date as the national stage), a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. **120** in the national stage to the international application is inappropriate and may result in the submission being treated as an application filed under 35 U.S.C. **111(a)**. See **MPEP § 1893.03(a)**. Accordingly, it is not necessary for the applicant to amend the first sentence(s) of the specification to reference the international application number that was used to identify the application during international processing of the application by the international authorities prior to commencement of the national stage." (emphasis added)

4.) Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 25, 26, 28, 34, 35 and 37-39 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but stated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including the limitations of any intervening claims. The Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

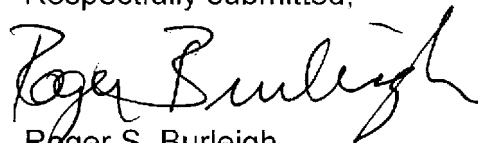
The Applicants have amended independent claims 21 and 30 to include the allowable subject matter of claims 28 and 37, respectively. Accordingly, claims 21 and 30 are now allowable. Furthermore, whereas claims 22-27 and 29 are dependent from claim 21 and claims 31-36 and 38-39 are dependent from claim 30, and include the limitations of their respective base claims, those claims are also now allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants believe all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for claims 21-27, 29-36 and 38-39.

The Applicants request a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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